

NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANEA

Published by
The Chicago Academy of Sciences
Lincoln Park - 2001 N. Clark St., Chicago 14, Illinois

No. 101

February 15, 1952

A New Race of the Round-tailed Muskrat, *Neofiber alleni*, from Southern Florida

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Studies on the mammals of southern Florida have revealed a new subspecies of *Neofiber alleni* True from the tip of the Florida Peninsula. The writer wishes to express his gratitude to Stanley P. Young of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Barbara Lawrence of the Museum of Comparative Zoology for loan of specimens for comparison. The new subspecies may be known as:

Neofiber alleni struix, **subsp. nov.**

Type. Adult male, skin and skull, No. 97732, Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan; collected 21 miles west of Miami, Dade County, Florida, by Raymond P. Porter, February 3, 1951. Original number 1676.

Distribution. Known from the Everglades in the region of the type locality, and presumed to occur over the remainder of the tip of the Florida Peninsula. See discussion below.

Diagnosis. Similar to *N. a. nigrescens* Howell in size, but differing from that race in the darker (more blackish, less red) coloration. Skull differences noted below.

Description of type. External measurements: Total length 338 mm.; tail 150 mm.; hind foot 46 mm.; ear from notch 20 mm. Cranial measurements: condylobasal length 48.1 mm.; zygomatic breadth 29.6 mm.; palatal length 29.1 mm. length of nasals 14.2 mm.; breadth of nasals 5.8 mm.; upper molar row 11.7 mm.; interorbital constriction 5.1 mm.

¹Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Color. Dorsum glossy Blackish Brown^c grading ventrally to Avellaneous; crown Blackish Brown; tail Light Seal Brown, scantily haired; feet Saccardo's Umber; hairs on ventral surface of neck white to base, not gray at base as remainder of ventral fur.

Characters and comparisons. *Neofiber a. struix* is darker than both previously described subspecies of *Neofiber* from Florida. Compared to the nominal race (as known from specimens from Oak Lodge, Brevard County, and the vicinity of Gainesville, Alachua County), *struix* lacks the "bleached" appearance characteristic of *alleni*. Specimens of *alleni* are close to Sorghum Brown of Ridgway, and have a generally ruddy appearance. Compared to a series of ten adult topotypes of *N. a. nigrescens* from Ritta., Palm Beach County, Florida, *struix* is darker. Howell in the original description of *nigrescens* characterizes this race as "upperparts fuscous-black, sometimes with a slight brownish tinge." The specimens of *struix* are consistently darker than the series of topotypical *nigrescens*. Thus the three described races of *Neofiber alleni* may be differentiated by the coat color: *alleni* is light and ruddy in appearance, *nigrescens* somewhat darker but with a generally brownish tone, and *struix* considerably darker than these two, with a dark brown to blackish appearance.

A series of fourteen adults of *N. a. struix* agrees well with the coloration of the type. All show the dark coloration, and the entire series is darker than topotypes of *nigrescens*. An old adult male from Hialeah, Dade County, has scattered white-tipped hairs on the dorsum, and several adults show a small tuft of white hairs at the tip of the tail.

External measurements (average and extremes) of six adult males and six adult females from Dade County are (all measurements in millimeters): total length 335 (314-355); tail 147 (132-168); hind foot 45 (42-50); ear from notch 19 (16-22). Cranial measurements of seven adult males and five adult females from the same locality: condylobasal length 47.2 (45.4-49.6); zygomatic breadth 28.8 (26.7-29.7); palatal length 28.3 (27.1-29.3); length of nasals 13.6 (13.1-14.2); breadth of nasals 5.6 (5.1-6.0); upper molar row 11.9 (11.3-12.6); interorbital constriction 5.0 (4.6-5.4).

Comparison of these measurements with those of the topotypical series of *N. a. nigrescens* is somewhat difficult. Of the series of ten topotypes at hand, seven are unsexed, eight lack collector's measurements, two have no skulls, and the eight skulls available are in such condition that a complete

^cRidgway, Color Standards and Color Nomenclature, 1912.

³Journ. Mam., vol. 1, p. 79, 1920.

set of measurements could not be taken on any single skull. Fortunately, Howell (*loc. cit.*) records the measurements of the type of *nigrescens*, but he did not record any measurements for the entire series. The fragmentary nature of these skulls indicates that *struix* may differ from *nigrescens* in larger skull measurements. The few external measurements of *nigrescens* available seem to show that *nigrescens* and *struix* are about equal in total length, but measurements of tail and hind foot are longer in specimens of *struix*. The difficulties of making comparisons on such fragmentary and poorly documented material are obvious. Compared to *alleni*, *struix* averages larger in total length, tail, and hind foot. The skull measurements of *struix* and *alleni* show that the latter is somewhat smaller in all measurements taken. Again, a small series of *alleni* is available for comparison. The most constant diagnostic feature of *struix* is its much darker coloration. Larger series of both *nigrescens* and *alleni* are needed to demonstrate cranial and external differences, if they exist.

Remarks. A single specimen from 8 miles east of Chokoloskee, Collier County, (Biol. Surv. Coll. 231483) is intermediate in color between *nigrescens* and *struix*. However, it resembles topotypes of *struix* to a greater extent, and is here assigned to that race. The locality of this specimen is to the southwest of the type locality of *nigrescens*, and almost directly west of the type locality of *struix*. This specimen, collected by Howell, was referred by him in the original description of *nigrescens* to that race. Since *Neofiber* is extremely local in its distribution throughout Florida and southern Georgia, it may be assumed that variation in pelage color between various localities is of commonplace occurrence. Even though differences exist between the Collier County specimen and the Dade County series, it seems advisable at present to refer this isolated specimen to *struix*.

The subspecific designation is the Latin word meaning "a heap or mass of things," an allusion to the dome-shaped houses which the round-tailed muskrats build from a variety of vegetable material.

Specimens examined. Total specimens examined 39, as follows: *Neofiber a. alleni*—Florida, Brevard County, Oak Lodge 7; Alachua County, Gainesville 2; Putnam County, 3 miles east of Hawthorne 3. *Neofiber a. nigrescens* Florida, Palm Beach County, Ritta 10. *Neofiber a. struix* Florida, Dade County, 17 miles west of Miami 1; 20 miles west of Miami 7; 21 miles west of Miami 5; 23 miles west of Miami 3; Hialeah 1; Collier County, 8 miles east of Chokoloskee 1.

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